A

# SERMON,

Preached before the

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE.

# SERMON.

BRITISH MUSEUM

# The NATURE of COMPLIANCES civil and religious, considered in

694.d 8
3

A

# SERMON,

Preached before the

# UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE.

---

By J. MAINWARING, B. D.
Fellow of St. JOHN'S COLLEGE.

---

*CAMBRIDGE*,
Printed by J. BENTHAM, Printer to the UNIVERSITY;
For W. THURLBOURN & J. WOODYER, in CAMBRIDGE;
And sold by J. BEECROFT in Pater-Noster-Row;
and W. SANDBY in Fleet-street, LONDON.

M.DCC.LXIV.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

To the RIGHT HONOURABLE

# THOMAS,

LORD VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH:

THIS

# DISCOURSE

IS INSCRIBED,

As a public Teſtimony of Reſpect and Gratitude,

By his LORDSHIP's moſt obliged

and moſt dutiful Servant,

J. MAINWARING.

## ROM. XIV. latter part of the 22d verſe.

*Happy is he that condemneth not himſelf in that thing which he alloweth.*

THESE words appear to have been more immediately intended for private uſe, and to convey this meaning chiefly, that every perſon ſhould have a conſtant eye to the rectitude of his own actions and deſigns. However, they may very well be urged in confirmation of that more general doctrine, which the Apoſtle inculcates through the whole of this chapter; — the neceſſity of candour, of condeſcenſion, of forbearance, in our intercourſe with others: and as naturally may they be interpreted with reſpect to the *meaſure* and *extent* of thoſe regards, to which human infirmity has an undoubted right.

I SHALL therefore conſider the text in both theſe views, but in the former, only as ſubſervient to the latter.

THAT blind partiality to ourſelves, or that ſlaviſh deference to others, which admits of what is *manifeſtly* wrong, betrays either the perverſion, or the weakneſs of the Moral Senſe. But this diſtinguiſhing part of our nature, and the relations we are placed in, are the foundation of ſo *many* duties, that there muſt needs be ſome which claſh and interfere: and the force of their rival claims may chance to be ſo nearly balanced, as to render it very difficult to decide between them.

THIS alone ſhould teach us to be candid in the opinions we form concerning the actions of others. Indiſcriminately to condemn every deviation from thoſe rules which *we* may think neceſſary, without knowing the private motives by which ſuch conduct was determined, is not only unwiſe, but unjuſt and cruel.

THE warm advocates for *freedom* ought to conſider, that things ever ſo indifferent in themſelves, may be very important in their conſequences; or may ceaſe to be indifferent by a ſlight alteration in the circumſtances attending them. Beſides, there is always hazard in a near approach to thoſe ſacred boun-

daries

daries which ſeparate right and wrong. And, if a virtuous man has occaſion for caution even in the uſe of that liberty to which his claim is clear; how much more ſhould he guard againſt the danger his very character may lead to, — that of indulging his gratitude or his affection at the expence of higher * obligations?

SHOULD the patrons of *rigour* look upon this as a ſufficient vindication of *their* principles, it muſt be obſerved, that they are equally fallacious with thoſe of the oppoſite party. For religion has been rendered inſupportable, virtue has become impracticable, through the needleſs clogs, the multiplied reſtraints, which *men* have *invented* and *impoſed*. Happy is he, who dares to diſdain ſuch ſlavery as this, yet has no reaſon

* A certain Ancient being obliged to anſwer for an offence he had committed, alledged in excuſe, the irreſiſtible applications of a Friend and Patron. And what (ſaid the Judge) if he had aſked you to ſet fire to the Capitol? *That* indeed (ſaid the other) is a thing he never *would* have aſked, though if he *had*, I ſhould hardly have refuſed him.

I will lengthen this ſhort note only by adding, that if any Patrons of our times *have* ever made a wrong uſe of their authority, it is ſurely with an ill grace Men of learning would complain of this fault, ſhould they themſelves, by a ſervile obſequiouſneſs, and by abject ſubmiſſions, have done all they could to encourage it.

reaſon to condemn himſelf for liberties or compliances, which are ſinful or faulty, mean or unbecoming.

UPON the whole; in ſuch caſes as do not fall within the deſcription of any fixed rule or precept, all men are alike referred by nature to reaſon and conſcience: and they ought with equal care to conſult them both.

REASON *alone*, eſpecially in an age ſo fond of ſpeculation and refinement, may prove an inſufficient and treacherous guide.

ON the other hand, although from the too great ſtrength or delicacy of their feelings, ſome minds may be liable to doubts and ſcruples, which have little or no foundation; yet ſurely it is better to be tender and timid, than daring or inſenſible. Nor is it a matter of *no* moment to obey God with the will and affections even in thoſe points, where the underſtanding cannot bear a part.

BUT I haſten to my main deſign; to ſhew the nature, extent, and utility of mutual condeſcenſion and

and compliance. The more fully to illuſtrate and enforce theſe duties, I ſhall appeal chiefly to Scriptural facts. The facts I mean, are the *human* methods and expedients, to which God was pleaſed to have recourſe for the accompliſhment of his purpoſe in converting the world; and which he perſevered in the uſe of, under all the different forms and ſtates of Religion, both before and after the Chriſtian æra.

PERMIT me only, before we enter on this principal article, juſt to remind you of a remarkable paſſage or two in our own hiſtory, which ſeem quite appoſite to the point in queſtion.

IN the courſe of thoſe national diſputes, which, however laudable in their beginning, terminated in the deſtruction of our church and ſtate; good men might well be perplexed how to act, or how to refrain from acting. There was a time, when the beſt and braveſt on each ſide, apprehending from the violences that ſubſiſted, the events that enſued; were ſenſible of the neceſſity for mutual conceſſions; were ſufficiently diſpoſed to make them; but a mutual ſtiff-

neſs

neſs † and jealouſy prevented the proper advances, or diſappointed their effects, 'till all hopes of accommodation were at an end. The irreſolute, contradictory conduct of the King concurred to defeat thoſe hopes. He, who had rejected the legal, the reaſonable petitions of his worthieſt ſubjects; ſubmitted to the inſolent and barbarous demands of his enemies, in a matter too, where not only truth and religion, but his own honour was deeply concerned. But no man ever * felt more ſeverely the meaning of theſe words of St. Paul. "Happy is he that condemneth not himſelf in that thing which he alloweth."

In times ſtill nearer to our own, we find wiſe and good men reaſoned very differently concerning the meaſures of ſubmiſſion, and the remedies for the abuſes of regal authority, which at thoſe periods ſtained the glory of our laws not much leſs, than it has ſuffered at others from the abuſes of liberty. When the rights of Subjects are openly invaded by their Rulers,

† To this cauſe chiefly may be attributed the miſcarriage of all the *earlier* Treaties between the King and Parliament.

* "I only ſay this, that an unjuſt ſentence that I ſuffered to take effect, is puniſhed now by an unjuſt ſentence upon *me*." Part of the King's ſpeech upon the ſcaffold. See Ruſhworth's Collections. Vol. 7. p. 1492.

ers, how far the former are bound to endure and to comply, is a matter of great conſequence, and of nice diſcuſſion. Certain it is, that *before* the exceptions to the general doctrine of obedience can take place, the neceſſity muſt be very urgent, the danger great and imminent. And never, I believe, was any free People better diſpoſed to pay a proper reſpect to its Governors, than the people of this country for a ſeries of years after the Reſtoration; 'till, by the conduct of thoſe Governors, the Nobles and Repreſentatives of the nation were at length reduced to proclaim to the world, that there were other public duties as ſacred as that of allegiance. Their refuſal of it at ſuch a juncture, was juſtified by the ſtrongeſt reaſons, and converted by the happieſt art, to their own and the nation's advantage.

BUT I ſhall confine myſelf, as was propoſed, to Scripture evidence and authority.

IN the old Teſtament we meet with many inſtances, that may ſerve as comments on this paſſage of the New, which we are now conſidering.

EVEN under the rigours of the Moſaic Syſtem we diſcover ſome relaxations.

A GREAT part of the Levitical Law is employed in providing for the ſecurity of the true worſhip. Hence ſuch a multitude of obſervances oppoſed to thoſe of the Heathens. But although this was the main object of that inſtitution, there are parts of it which carry a contrary appearance. Several of its rites are very little different from the Pagan; ſome plainly derived and copied from them. To account for this ſtrange aſſortment, various conjectures have been formed, and reaſons aſſigned; moſt of them founded on the natural quality of thoſe rites, and the peculiar character of the Jews. To which perhaps might be added, that an abſolute and total ſeparation was impracticable. For that People, though greatly diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of mankind by the nature and form of their civil and religious polity, were ſtill to be ſurrounded by Heathens, with whom they had frequent and unavoidable wars. Nor was it poſſible for the wiſe precautions of their law wholly to obviate the inconveniences ariſing from ſuch an intercourſe. But theſe frail votaries of the only pure perſuaſion drank ſo deep at the polluted ſtreams of Egypt, that all the remedies applied, both of the natural and extraordinary, both of the gentler and ſeverer ſort, were hardly ſufficient for their cure. Indeed it ſhould ſeem as

if

if the habits and attachments contracted during their captivity, were become a part of their conſtitution. And, in *ſome* of theſe the wiſdom of God ſaw fit to indulge them; as, out of the ſame tender regard to their infirmity, it permitted them to retain other cuſtoms, ſo far from excellent, that they could not be tolerated even under a milder and more indulgent Diſpenſation.

THERE are many other occurrences in the Jewiſh hiſtory, which diſcover the eaſy temper of true Religion, at a time when the infinite miſchiefs ariſing from a falſe worſhip, required more than ordinary ſtrictneſs.

BUT a greater than Moſes and the Prophets muſt be conſulted on this queſtion.

IT is eaſy to imagine what a delicate affair our Saviour and his Apoſtles had to manage, between the rites of Moſes and the ſuperſtitions of the Gentiles.

NOW we find, that though by his coming, the Ceremonial law was plainly ſuperſeded, yet as long as he

reſided among the Jews, he ſubmitted to its appointments, like the reſt of that nation. But while he readily conformed to the innocent deſires of the People, as yet unacquainted with the nature of his doctrine; he made the Rulers and Teachers feel the weight of his authority, whenever their wiſdom ſavoured too much of cunning, or their virtue of affectation.

How juſt, how beautiful is the oppoſition between ſuch inſtances of rigour towards the arrogant and diſingenuous; and his treatment of the humble and penitent; whoſe errors, faults, and even ſins; but furniſhed occaſions for the exerciſe of his clemency and condeſcenſion?

LET us next conſider the conduct of St. Paul in ſimilar ſituations. No ſmall part of the trouble he met with in the diſcharge of his office, proceeded from the corrupt policy of Teachers, who, for the ſake of popularity, ſacrificed integrity; who, inſtead of bending the minds of their hearers to the doctrines of the Goſpel, bent thoſe doctrines to their inclinations; and by mixing with them the obſolete

rites of the Moſaic ceremonial, contrived to flatter the Jewiſh, regardleſs how much they diſguſted the Gentile converts.

WHAT then, in this nice exigency, was the conduct of their Apoſtle?

HE, who had condeſcended to circumciſe Timothy, though only one of his Parents was of Jewiſh extraction; he, whom we find actually engaged in a ſolemn vow, according to the Jewiſh cuſtoms; he, who whenever he ſafely could, readily accommodated himſelf to the humour of each party in its turn; — ſo rigid, ſo unrelenting does this perſon now ſhew himſelf, as to contradict, nay, reprimand St. Peter for his facility and complaiſance in a ſingle point conceded to ſome of his own countrymen. But mark the ſpirit and conſiſtency of St. Paul. *That* was a point, not only of great conſequence for the Jews themſelves to be better informed in; but the rights of the Gentiles alſo, and of every future Chriſtian, were deeply concerned in its deciſion. Otherwiſe indeed, there were many conſiderations, which ſeem to have been ſome excuſe for theſe inveterate prejudices.

The owners of them had alſo a ſort of natural claim to the indulgence of that Apoſtle, who was "an Hebrew, and an Iſraelite, and of the ſeed of Abraham, as well as they." And accordingly, we have ſeen, how very kind he was, and tender towards them, whenever the caſe would admit of it; though, in matters of conſequence, where compliance might be dangerous, he never indulged them; but, rather than ſeem to patroniſe their falſe notions ever ſo remotely, oppoſed them openly; exchanged the very name he bore; renounced, in the moſt formal and expreſs terms, all dependance on that law, for which they retained the moſt ſtubborn veneration.

In the earlier ages of Chriſtianity we meet with many traces of the ſame indulgent regards on the ſide of its Teachers. Far from exploding at once the whole ſacred ſyſtems of the People, to whom they offered their inſtructions; ſome parts they made no ſcruple to retain and to adopt; others they altered and accommodated; in both caſes not more conſpicuous for the frank facility, than the cautious diſcernment with which they acted. Nor could there be a ſtronger proof of their good ſenſe, than ſuch a happy application

tion of ancient ceremonies to the purpoſes of the new inſtitution. For when it was ſo violently oppoſed on all ſides, ſomething more than the uſe of extraordinary powers, was found expedient; —the arts of addreſs, which of courſe can much leſs be diſpenſed with, now thoſe powers are withdrawn.

AND here let me take occaſion to obſerve how much happier it would have been for mankind, had all who have ſince been employed in propagating the Goſpel, as conſtantly acted on the ſame generous and truly politic principles. How greatly indeed does the welfare of the world continue to depend on the purſuance of theſe principles, where-ever the ſame great work is ſtill to be carried on, as in that vaſt tract, which our own Society has *now* to range in, the newly-ceded provinces of America? Let any one reflect on the almoſt deſperate difficulties of inſtructing Tribes, immerſed in the very depths of ignorance and barbariſm; he will ſee reaſon to fear, leſt all the zeal, courage and fidelity which a Teacher can poſſeſs, ſhould not be ſufficient, unleſs aſſiſted by the united advantages of temper and talents; by the wiſeſt management, and the happieſt addreſs. The neceſſity of union in the body, is as evi-

dent

dent as that of proper qualifications in the members. For what could be expected ſhould any of that zeal which ought to be applied to eſtabliſh the doctrines of our Redeemer, be made ſubſervient to the ſelfiſh, or ambitious aims of a Sect, or Party? It is to be hoped there is little room for ſuch apprehenſions, but ſurely no precaution ſhould be omitted to guard againſt events, which, if ever they take place, muſt prove fatal to the progreſs of the Goſpel, and the intereſts of this country.

To confirm this obſervation, we have a ſtriking inſtance of no very diſtant date in that memorable conteſt between the Romiſh miſſionaries in China. It is not my intention to enter into the merits of that curious controverſy concerning the lawfulneſs of ceremonies, which, after long deliberation, ſome of them determined to allow, under certain limitations, and the others condemned in the ſtrongeſt terms. But a very ſlight review may ſerve to ſhew us the dangers of too rigid, or too relaxed a ſyſtem. Indeed, in ſpeculation it would be hard to ſay which of theſe is the moſt remote from truth: and as hard it is to determine in fact, whether chriſtianity ſuf-

fered

fered greater injury from the temporizing ſuppleneſs of the Jeſuits, or the bigotted inflexibility of the Dominicans. Theſe would admit no kind of temperaments, to reconcile the ancient uſages and fundamental laws of that Empire, with the precepts and injunctions of Chriſt; while thoſe invented expedients of accommodation, by no means conſiſtent with the purity and ſimplicity enjoined in the Goſpel, or with the openneſs and ſincerity required in its Miniſters.

HAD the Apoſtle's rule been duly attended to; had more caution been joined with the compliance on the one ſide, and leſs ſeverity with the refuſal on the other; both parties might have contributed to the happy accompliſhment of that grand undertaking, which ſo fatally miſcarried in their hands.

I CANNOT conclude this diſcourſe without reminding you of the obligations we have to thoſe candid and moderate Members of our church, who laboured to reconcile the fierce, uncharitable diſputes of contending Sects, by enforcing the reaſons for mutual compliance, and by ſtating its juſt boundaries.

The

The title of Latitudinarians, and other injurious appellations which their generous attempt drew upon them, did not diſcourage them from perſiſting in it. They ſtill reſolved to ſeparate points of mere ſpeculation, and matters of Church diſcipline from thoſe unalterable rules of faith and practice, with which they are ignorantly blended, and for which they are unhappily miſtaken, by the Zealots of every denomination. Demands arrogantly urged, ſuggeſted by bad motives, and tending to bad ends, they refuſed to admit; ſtill ſenſible, that, as no Syſtem, at all dependent on human wiſdom, can be complete in every part; even in the beſt, there muſt be ſome foundation for conceſſions: nay, they were willing, for the ſake of union, to make ſome ſacrifices: an inſtance of candor, which will not lower our idea of their wiſdom or dignity, when we conſider, what the experience of all times has ſo clearly ſhewn, — that the ſame minute, contracted habits of thinking, which diſpoſe men to be pertinacious and uncomplying in trifles, too often are the cauſe of that groſs inattention, that ſtupid indifference, which poſſeſſes them in matters of real importance.

ON the other hand, how would our virtuous predeceſſors have been ſhocked at the progreſs of thoſe looſe principles, thoſe eaſy and convenient maxims, that are now in vogue, and are thought the peculiar produce of the preſent age? Among the many valuable diſtinctions in its favour, it is much to be lamented that one ſo diſgraceful ſhould be ſuffered to remain. Yet, if ſuch maxims are countenanced in the *world*; it is much to be wiſhed they never may be allowed admittance *here*: but that a conſtant and ſtrict adherence to truth and virtue; and to thoſe rules and forms, on the exact obſervance of which muſt depend the ſecurity of every bleſſing we enjoy;--that a reverence for thoſe ſacred rules, may prove the conſiſtency of our conduct with our character and ſituation.

*FINIS.*

*Lately Published by the same Author,*

*(Addressed to the Right Honourable* THOMAS *Lord* HYDE,*)*

# TWO DISCOURSES

ON THE

# OFFICES of PITY and COURTESY.

Preached before the University of *Cambridge.*

BRITISH MUSEUM